THE Interspecies Newsletter

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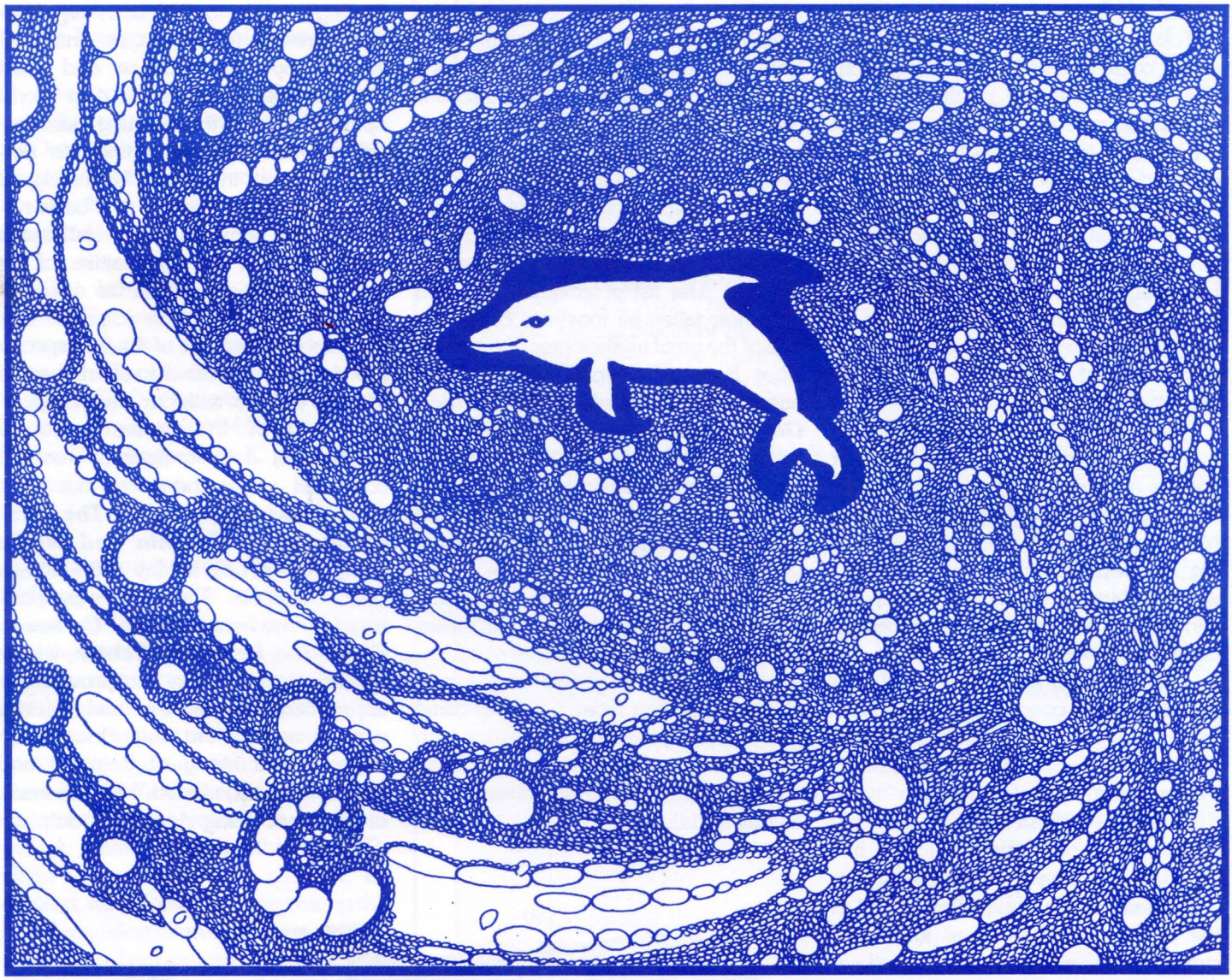


The Human/Dolphin Connection

Ten years ago, a small band of American artists, environmentalists, and technicians flew to Japan to attempt to convince a group of fisherman at Iki Island to stop slaughtering dolphins. The local people had overfished the area to the point that the ocean was fast becoming a desert and the entire economy of the region teetered on the brink of collapse. The fishermen noticed that the dolphins, who had shared the fishstocks with the humans for nigh on a thousand years, were still showing up every winter despite the drastic declines. Rather than institute severe measures upon their own hi-tech fishing methods in an effort to conserve the precious fish resources, the fishermen, instead started slaughtering thousands of dolphins. The animals, who were cast in the unfortunate role of *competition* for the *last* of the fish, became a convenient scapegoat as well as a new catch for fishermen who were faced with earning a living in a place where there were no longer any fish. Almost implausibly, the Japanese government supported and subsidized the

slaughter of dolphins without ever offering any viable aid to bolster the primary issue of conserving fish stocks.

The team of Americans worked on Iki Island for two winters, involved in Peace Corps-style consulting, acoustic research, protest/media events, and finally the writing of an environmental impact study. At the end of the second winter, their efforts accrued a limited success when the Federal Government in Tokyo announced that the slaughters would cease due to "repercussions from abroad." By the end of the following winter the government announced that the killing of dolphins on Iki Island had declined by a very substantial 95%. Although the killing certainly did decline, the Iki Islanders also took the precautionary measure of no longer permitting foreigners on their turf during winter killing time. In other words, there was no longer any way for the international environmental community to monitor the activities on Iki Island.

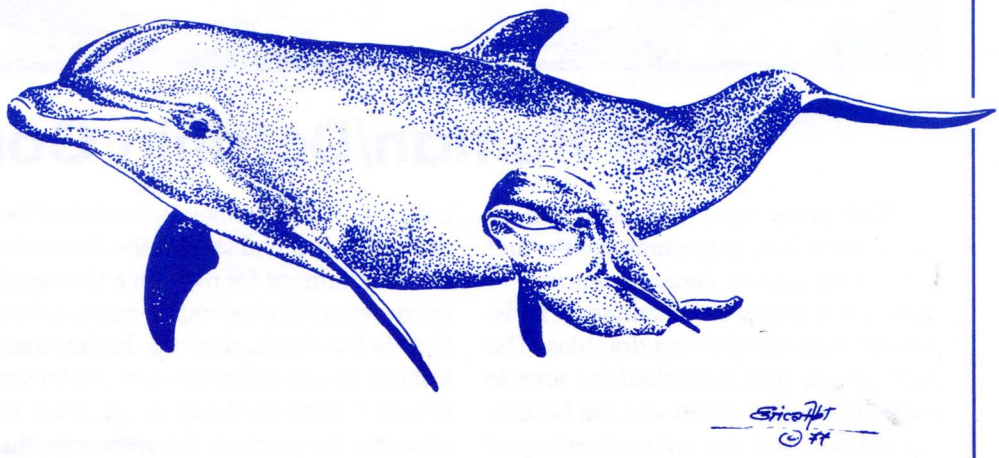
This uphill work in Japan was funded by ***Greenpeace, The Animal Welfare Institute, The Animal Protection Institute, The World Wildlife Fund,*** and a host of other private foundations. Needing a tax-deductible umbrella under which to raise funds for this project, the band of four people started ***Interspecies Communication Inc.*** So it goes.

IC's original focus was specifically based upon the concept of communicating to wild and free-swimming dolphins through the media of touch and music. Yet anyone who follows our work through this newsletter can certainly discern that our original focus has broadened. We have moved away from the urgent and environmental, as well as the mythic and intellectual ideas that surround the various small, toothed cetaceans collectively known as the delphinids. Over the past two years, IC has mounted projects and published newsletter accounts of relationships with orcas, turtles, beluga whales, yellowjackets, humpback whales, wolves, and even poppies - but almost no dolphins. However, if we have modified IC's original dolphinesque face, then it is in the cause of devising methods to transform the manner that contemporary human culture currently relates to all of nature. Whereas we started out as specialists, we have transformed into interspecies generalists. Likewise, IC may be the only organization in the world dedicated to communication with wild aniimals from the perspective of the artist.

However, it is no overstatement to point out that human beings probably assign more stature and mystique to dolphins than to any other earthly species. How is it that dolphins utilize the energy of a hummingbird but are the size of a human being? Does all that energy come from their voluntary breathing? How is it that they possess a brain larger than our own, yet don't swim away from their human persecutors as do just about every other animal species? The Iki islanders called their dolphin victims, "Samurai", because they rushed to their own death when they could have easily escaped. The list of enigmatic dolphin behavior, taken all together, comprises one of the great mythologies of our time; what Peter Shenstone has so aptly named ***The Legend of the Golden Dolphin.*** These sea mammals remain the subject matter of a constant stream of books, colloquia, artworks, and scientific studies. Some of this human-based activity seems suspiciously akin to the establishment of a dolphin church. Other enterprises appear like nothing so much as a dolphin fan club, replete with glossy photos and breathy accounts of touching dolphin skin. That dolphin grin may be frozen on their faces, yet it has come to signify a euphemistic relationship with nature where all beings are essentially friendly and wise. The dolphins are our animal Buddhas.

Because this organization promotes direct communication between humans and other animals, IC often serves as an observation post for dolphin activities worldwide. So we are happy to report that the interest in dolphins is definitely on the upturn. Over the past six months IC has accumulated a growing file of dolphin projects, books, scientific studies, art events, conferences, channelings, healings, technology, music, organizations, dreams, myths, etc. etc. Intrigued equally by hard science and hard occultism, IC's observation post seems optimally located for reporting these varied activities without getting too persnickety about intentions. Ultimately, all of these programs testify to a basic notion that the human/dolphin relationship is as varied as the personalities of the people who choose to do the discovering. Not to mention the dolphins. This summer 1988 edition of the Interspecies newsletter is dedicated to sharing some of these projects with our readership.

Many of the humans actively involved in dolphin research recently convened under the eucalyptus trees and squawking parrots at ***The First International Dolphin and Whale Conference***, held in May 1988 at Valla Beach Australia. The event was sponsored by the ***International Cetacean Education Research Centre***, whose primary activity seeks "to provide the appropriate environment and facilities where non-violent interdisciplinary research and study of dolphins and whales can be combined." Like so much of the work being done with dolphins



worldwide, the Valla beach Centre acknowledges that dolphins need to be conserved because they "hold a valuable key to our human evolution". The Centre itself will eventually become a kind of interspecies university with their extensive facility built on a hill overlooking the Pacific Ocean. For more information write: PO Box 110 Nambucca Heads, NSW 2448, Australia.

Two of the most intriguing presentations at the conference involved the use of dolphins for healing. Dr. Horace Dobbs, an Englishman and author of several books about cetaceans, has been diving and interacting with the lone wild dolphins who seem to seek out human company. Noticing over time that humans become excited and strengthened in the presence of these creatures, Dr. Dobbs reasoned that they might alter the behavior of chronic depressives. Now he has commenced ***The Sunflower Project***, (Norwich house, Savile St., Hull, Humberside,HU13EG, UK.) to sponsor various emotionally disturbed people to swim with these few wild dolphins that frequent the English Coastline. The project began last summer with three people including an anorexic woman, and two severely depressed men. According to Dr. Dobbs in describing one of these encounters at sea: "we watched the man change from being apprehensive, scared and withdrawn, to a smiling joyous person who became totally involved with the dolphin, and forgot everyone and everything around him".

The second dolphin/healing project received a somewhat more controversial hearing from the essentially animal-lib audience because it involves the use of dolphins kept in a semi-captive situation to aid in the healing of autistic children. Founded by Dr. Betsy Smith, ***The Dolphins Plus Autism Project***, "attempts to verify the therapeutic value of the dolphin/autistic interaction in a more scientific and controlled setting." Thus the project seeks "to establish a protocol for the practice of therapy with various disabilities." Dr. Smith's video documentary demonstrates quite clearly how the dolphins are capable of engaging these children. For more info, write: 67 NW 21st, Homestead FL 33030.

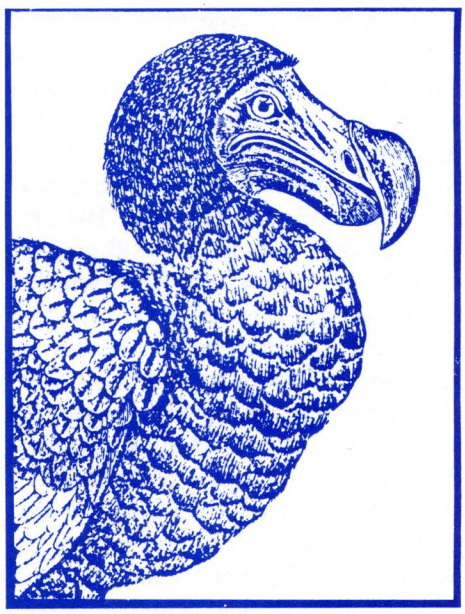
The subject of healing and cetaceans can take many forms. Whereas field biology used to be based on the gathering of information with little concern about how that information was eventually put to use, the best of the new breed of biologists are firstly concerned in utilising information as a means to heal the tattered environment which is this Earth. So in landlocked Nepal, Dr. Tej Kumar Strestha of the ***Royal Nepal Academy of Science*** (Kathmandu, PO Box 3323, Nepal) is studying the endangered Ganges River Dolphin in an attempt to preserve the entire environment of the upper Ganges River. Dr. Strestha is currently working to establish a series of river parks, free from the degradation caused by dams, where the dolphins might breed free from pollution. Interestingly enough, these parks will also protect the habitat of both the Indian elephant and the Indian Rhinoceros.

In Los Angeles, Joan Bishop has started ***The Dolphin Dreams Newsletter*** (2272 Colorado Blvd, Suite 1125, Los Angeles, CA 90041) to explore "the mystery and fascination of cetacean consciousness". Published quarterly, the newsletter offers bits of environmental news, book reviews, descriptions of dolphin dreams by members, speculation about dolphin consciousness, poetry, and the accounts of people who experience dolphins through channeling.

From Sweden comes a protest mounted by the animal rights organization, ***The Nordic Society against Painful Experiments on Animals***. Evidently, Sweden's Kolmarden dolphinarium has recently announced plans to purchase a number of "already captive" orcas. Where these large black and white dolphins will come from is being kept a tight secret, although it is duly noted that a bankrupt oceanarium in Iceland has four adolescent orcas for sale. To protest this growing concern over the right of human beings to capture and hold cetaceans, write to ***Kolmarden's Djurpark,*** c\o Mats Amundin, 618 00 Kolmarden, Sweden. Actually, the protest aginst holding these orcas also comes from another quarter where ***The Whale Conservation Society*** (20 W. Lea Rd., Bath, Avon, BA1 3RL, UK) has mounted a protest to return the Icelandic orcas back to the sea right now. Write them for more info.

Perhaps the most heartening news related to oceanariums and captive animals comes from Australia where the state of ***Victoria*** has banned the capture and holding of any cetaceans for purposes of display and entertainment. There are many longtime animal rights activists who hope this law portends an end to the entire oceanarium concept where dolphins are kept in concrete pools and taught to perform tricks in trade for food.

Recent books to emerge from the human/dolphin connection include ***Behind the Dolphin Smile*** by Richard O'Barry (Algonquin Books) which describes the author's years of interactions with bottlenose dolphins. Working first as the trainer of Flipper, O'Barry's book moves from an explanation of dolphins as show business, into an account of his attempts to illegally liberate dolphins, and concludes with his role as part of the team who recently retrained and then released the captive dolphins, Joe and Rosie, back to the sea.



Pictures in the Dolphin Mind, (Sheridan House) is Frank Robson's personal account of his own lifelong association with dolphins. It extends from his use of telepathy to train captive dolphins in New Zealand, to a collaboration with Aborigines at Monkey Mia in Australia where wild dolphins swim right up the beach to interact with humans, and finally over to Iki Island where Frank worked closely with the crew from IC.

The book is short so that those wishing a more expansive treatment of Frank's work might also want to search for his earlier hard-to-find book ***Thinking Dolphins, Talking Whales*** (Reed).

Animal Dreaming, *(Bantam)* is written by IC director Jim Nollman. It discusses the dolphins from the point of view of both mythology and intellect before delving into a philosophical discussion of the author's work with dolphins in Japan. The book moves through an explanation of various communication studies with turkeys, mosquitos, monkeys, and orcas; and then concludes with a description of the IC human/dolphin community project where humans succeeded in utilizing music to attract wild dolphins for daily interactions. This book may be ordered directly from *IC*.

The subject of how and what dolphins communicate to one another has long been a subject of conjecture in the scientific world. Two hi-tech projects with dolphins-as-communicators are now getting underway in the Caribbean. Richard Ferraro, an expert in ultrasound imaging, heads the first one. His program seeks to "provide the methodology to finally answer the question of whether the natural communication of dolphins is a symbolic system comparable to human language." Using a sophisticated array of microprocessors joined to acoustic sensors, the study will identify individual dolphins by their voice patterns. Once this is accomplished, it will be possible to determine the vocal interactions between the pod members and correlate these conversations to observed behavior. This project is sponsored by ***Dolphin Experience*** (PO Box F 2433, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, Bahamas).

The Aspen Research Institute, (PO Box 12394, Aspen CO 81612) takes a more general approach to the question of language and intellect by not only using acoustic parameters in its inquiry, but also biomagnetic, electromagnetic and thermal emissions as well. Called the System Rosetta, the study is based around a computer to which an entire array of sensors will be attached. Headed by Dean Rollings, the project plans to work with wild dolphins located off the coast of Puerto Rico.

A more organic attitude is taken by ***Franck Charreire*** (BP 2337, 13213 Marseilles Cedex 2, France). During July of 1987, a lone female bottlenose dolphin settled just off a small island in the Mediterranean. The dolphin soon turned into a local tourist attraction when she permitted human swimmers to play with her. Taking the point of view that the dolphin should be treated as "an animal ambassador", a special welcoming event was organized by the local humans, during which she was officially accorded the name, ***Fanny***. At this writing, the dolphin is still in the area, and so a second event, to be held "in recognition of the human/dolphin relationship" is now being planned.

And lastly, through the eyewitness account of ***Sam LaBudde***, and the promotional fortitude of ***The Marine Mammal Fund,*** (Fort Mason Bldg E, San Francisco, CA, 94118) as well as ***Greenpeace*** and the ***Earth Island Institute***, a video document has finally been produced which clearly demonstrates what many of us have intuited for years: that the US tuna industry is brutally exterminating tens of thousands of dolphins per year in the cause of a tuna fishing technique that may catch more dolphins than tuna. There may be no solution to the problem other than an outright ban on the use of purse seine nets by the tuna industry. Since the industry, itself, seems outrageously irresponsible in its disregard for what is called "the incidental kill of dolphins", IC joins many other groups within the environmental community in supporting *a boycott of all canned tuna fish products.*

In conclusion, the most noteworthy development to emerge from all of this recent correspondence is a trend toward the establishment of human/cetacean communities at various places around the world, but especially in Hawaii and Australia. These are interspecies testing grounds where humans may comfortably convene while also interacting directly with dolphins in the open environment of the ocean. The species of choice seems to be *tursiops truncatus*, the bottlenose dolphin, although one center will also focus on *stenella,* the spinner dolphin. IC remains in correspondence with several of these fledgling centers, and will continue to report on them as their doors open wider to a public forever intrigued by the lure of the dolphins.

IC Field Projects

IC sponsors two field projects this summer. ***The Beluga Peace Project*** occurs this July along the channels and mudflats of the MacKenzie River Delta of Arctic Canada. The project is noteworthy for several reasons including:

● Our attempts to encourage the 10,000 or more belugas to interact with us through the two-way window of musical communication develops as one of the first behavioral studies ever conducted on this Arctic species. Since the MacKenzie belugas have been hunted by native peoples for centuries with almost no contact from friendly humans, the IC crew will effectively operate as human ambassadors, representing an entirely benign method of interaction.

● The project will be documented and partially sponsored by the European, GEO magazine for inclusion in a future issue. We have also received funding from the Kino Film Institute (USSR) and Aeroflot airlines.

● Our international crew includes Soviet film maker Andres Slapins, German author Michael Remann, Canadian Psychic Jonathan Churcher, as well as GEO photographer Jim Balog, IC recording engineer Mike Sofen, boat liaison Chip Porter, and IC research director Jim Nollman.

THE SECOND FIELD TRIP OCCURS IN mid-August: IC's tenth consecutive year as sponsor of a communication study with the pods of orcas who frequent the inland waterways of British Columbia. For the past five years we organized The ***IC Orca Project*** so that many people could access the nightly interspecies sessions. Thus we encouraged participation by, among others, musicians, psychics, writers, anthropologists, ethologists, Tibetan Lamas, and many children. By contrast, we are presently organizing this year's rendition as an exercise in the fundamentals of our experience. As such we go to the orcas for two and a half weeks with a much smaller group consisting of the immediate IC community who were most responsible for staffing the past trips. Whereas we conducted our experiments in interspecies music making from the platform of a large chartered boat for several years now, this year we opt for kayaks and a shore station.

The results and impressions from both of these summer field projects will be duly reported in the next issue of this newsletter.

Intraplanetary Communication

Five years ago, on the eve of our departure for the monthlong IC Orca Project, David Abrams showed up unannounced at the IC office, asking if he might join us with the whales. After some discussion, in which he offered an uncanny demonstration of sleight of hand, as well as his own excellent writing skills, we agreed to his participation. He dropped out of sight soon after we returned to Seattle, only to reappear again three years later as professor of environmental philosophy at Stony Brook College in New York. Then last year, he sent several pieces of his writing, including a classic piece about showing off his unlimited storehouse of magic tricks in rural Asia only to find that the local people had cast him in the role of Shaman and now demanded that he produce a workable fishing omen. That piece has been printed in ***Parabola*** *and reprinted in* ***The Utne Reader****. Now he offers a statement that addresses humanities awakening awareness of a more direct link to nature. This communication is transmitted and received through the mechanism of a sentient biosphere; that which we now call Gaia. It was read by David Abrams, Amy Hannon, and Chris Wells at the plenary session of* ***The Second North American Bioregional Congress*** *held in August 1986.*

We know that Bioregionalism is inevitably, unavoidably, involved in magic processes. Many individuals, in this time, are beginning to feel strange sensations, sudden bursts of awareness, communications from other dimensions. Those of us who do not work within formal religious structures do not, in general, interpret such events as out-of-body experiences, but rather as the body itself waking up to where it is; we construe these not as communications from other worlds outside of or beyond the material world, but rather as communications from forgotten dimensions of this very world, communications from other embodied forms of sensitivity and awareness too long ignored by human civilization.

The other animals, for instance, have given us a great deal, and they have been patient with us humans, as have the plants, the rivers, and the land itself. Many creatures have donated their lives to our quest – many, for instance, are even now being subjected to excruciating pain in our laboratories before being "sacrificed" – yet still they are unaware of our purposes. The fish find it more and more difficult to swim in the stinging waters , while the passage upstream is blocked by freshly built dams; birds spin through the chemical breeze, hunting in circles for that patch of forest which has been their home. They are not alone in their dizziness, for things are quickly worsening throughout the biosphere. Naturally then, the mountains, the other creatures, the entire non-human world is struggling to make contact with us; the plants we eat are trying to ask us what we are up to, the animals are signaling to us in our dreams or in forests, the whole earth is rumbling and straining to let us remember that we are not just in it but of it, that this planet, this macrocosm is our own flesh – that the grass is our hair and the trees are our hands, and the rivers are our own blood – that the Earth is our real body, and that it is alive.

And so everywhere now, our exclusive space of purely human language is beginning to spring leaks as other styles of communication make themselves heard, or seen, or felt, and all over, in so many different ways we feel intimations of a wholeness that is somehow foreign to us, and we see the treacheries of another reality.

It is now indeed a time for magic. But this is no supernatural thing, this magic. We are simply awakening to our own world for the first time, and hearing the myriad voices of the Earth.